

# CROSSROADS

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A Newsletter of the U.S. Mission in Nigeria

## On the Way to 2015: MORE THAN ELECTIONS



- How Democracies Transfer Power
- A Special Message from the U.S. Ambassador on Elections



# YALI: U.S. Ambassador Thanks Nigerian Youth



*Information Officer Rhonda Ferguson-Augustus (right), and Public Diplomacy Officer Ellen Peterson (left), interview YALI candidates in Kaduna -- photo by Sani Mohammed.*

**T**his past March, in response to the White House's invitation to 500 of Africa's best and brightest young leaders, U.S. Mission Nigeria interviewed hundreds of promising candidates in Abuja, Kaduna, Jos, Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Ibadan. From among the more than 15,000 Nigerians who applied to President Obama's Young African Leadership Initiative (YALI) Washington Fellowship Program, some 46 Nigerians were selected earlier this month by the U.S. Department of State for leadership training, academic coursework, and mentoring. I want to congratulate the selectees, and thank all who applied. The YALI program will help create opportunities in Africa to put the selected fellows' newly acquired

skills to practical use in propelling economic growth and prosperity, and strengthening democratic institutions.

During the course of this massive effort, our teams interviewed 600 Nigerians between the ages of 25 and 35. I want to share the U.S. Mission's impressions with you about the people we met.

We were deeply impressed by many of the recurring themes that Nigerian youth exhibited: drive, optimism about Nigeria's future, and a profound desire for peaceful, positive change. We met many courageous individuals who, through their insight, talent, can-do spirit, and passion for democratic and market reform, have overcome tremendous obstacles. These young people question themselves, their fellow Nigerians, and their leaders. They

have determined that those questions are best answered by volunteering at youth centers; setting up career fairs and starting businesses; mentoring students; serving society's most vulnerable in orphanages, prisons, hospitals, and drug rehabilitation centers; and engineering innovative solutions to solve persistent social, political, and economic challenges. In addition to asking "Why isn't the situation better in Nigeria?" they also ask, "What can I do to improve it?"

Their scholarly work on human rights will drive the development of Nigeria's legal framework. Their media advocacy efforts are creating dialogue to inform and set the stage for peaceful change. Their streamlining efforts in government agencies and private companies are building capac-

*-- Continued on page 18*



James F. Entwistle  
U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria

**D**ear *CROSSROADS* readers, I am delighted to employ the pages of *CROSSROADS* to speak to you again. Before the coming elections in 2015, I intend to use

this column to address issues of importance to U.S.-Nigerian relations.

**T**he first of these discussions is about exercising the powerful right to vote. There can be no doubt that elections serve as a defining moment in the history of any country. In my country, we also know about the rugged road to democracy. Our own history is replete with struggles to confer full civil rights and liberties on all our citizens. Indeed, our efforts to empower all of our citizens have lasted more than two centuries and continue to the present day.

**W**hen I was a young boy in the early 1960s, I lived in Alabama in the Deep South at the height of the Civil Rights Movement. I vividly remember Dr. Martin Luther

King's famous march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965. I remember African Americans courageously demonstrating in the streets for the right to vote. Ever since then, I have had a strong sense of just how precious the right to vote is. So in the general elections in 2015, I encourage all Nigerians to honor those who have struggled and died around the world for that right to exercise their franchise. Go out there on Election Day and vote!

**F**inally, I encourage everyone to take a pledge against violence during this election season—and I hope readers will ask their representatives and those running for office to do the same.

*Ambassador James F. Entwistle*

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# More Than Elections

*Voters in Jigawa State prepare to cast their ballots during the Presidential elections in 2011 -- photo by Idika Onyukwu, participant.*

## *How Democracies Transfer Power*

*A lawyer and development professional with two decades of international experience, Eric Bjornlund co-founded and was head of Democracy International, Inc. He argues that in democracies, respecting rights isn't a choice leaders make day by day; it is the reason they govern." Excerpts:*

*By Eric Bjornlund*

**D**emocratic elections are widely recognized as a foundation of legitimate government. Democratic elections allow citizens to decide the issues that are most important to them and to choose those who would best address those issues. By allowing citizens to choose the manner in which they are governed, elections form the starting point for all

other democratic institutions and practices. Genuine democracy, however, requires substantially more. In addition to elections, democracy requires constitutional limits on governmental power, guarantees of basic rights, tolerance of religious or ethnic minorities, and representation of diverse viewpoints, among other things. To build authentic democracy, societies must foster

a democratic culture and rule of law that govern behavior between elections and constrain those who might be tempted to undermine election processes. As former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton remarked at Georgetown University in 2009, "Democracy means not only elections to choose leaders, but also active citizens and a free press and an independent judiciary



and transparent and responsive institutions that are accountable to all citizens and protect their rights equally and fairly. In democracies, respecting rights isn't a choice leaders make day by day; it is the reason they govern."

Smooth political transitions after elections are essential. In a healthy democracy, candidates who lose elections relinquish power gracefully and peacefully. By doing so, defeated candidates can emerge with their dignity intact and through their example contribute to the strength of their nation's democratic traditions, practices, and customs. Likewise, by reaching out to and showing respect for their political opponents, winning candidates help bridge differences and minimize the potential for conflict that can undermine democracy and development. In a true democracy, the rule of law, democratic political institutions, and independent civil society organizations help ensure respect for electoral outcomes. These institutions and values in turn bolster people's faith in their governments and their willingness to support peaceful political transitions.

### The Rule of Law

Democracy requires respect for the rule of law, which survives regardless of the outcome of elections. The United Nations Security Council defines the rule of law as when "all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards." The rule of law comprises legitimacy, fairness,

effectiveness, and checks and balances. Legitimacy requires that laws reflect a general social consensus that they be enacted in an open and democratic process. Fairness includes equal application of the law, procedural fairness, protection of civil liberties, and reasonable access to justice. Effectiveness refers to the consistent application and enforcement of laws. Fairly enforced laws that protect all citizens help establish a democratic state's legitimacy. Because such laws in a healthy democracy command public respect and loyalty, citizens accept disappointing election results. A



nation where laws are implemented fairly and disputes adjudicated impartially is more stable. Unjust or discriminatory laws, on the other hand, undermine public respect. If sufficiently egregious, such laws risk public disobedience or even revolt and create a climate less tolerant of unsatisfactory electoral outcomes. This is why U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower observed, "The clearest way to show what the rule of law means to us in everyday life is to recall what has happened when there is no rule of law." Rule of law implies

respect for fundamental civil rights and procedural norms and requires that these transcend the outcome of any given election. In a democracy, the election returns cannot affect protections for freedom of speech, freedom of the press, or the independence of the judiciary. New leaders, regardless of how broad their electoral mandate, should neither call these norms into question nor threaten the rights of any citizen, including those who supported a losing candidate. As a result, respect for the rule of law encourages peaceful election transitions. A defeated candidate who refuses to accept election results simply will find himself lacking support; citizens instead will view such a figure as an outlier, possibly a lawbreaker, and definitely a threat to their shared civic culture. Again, citizens are less likely to support revolts or to back candidates who refuse to accept election results in a country where legal processes are respected and the state is seen as legitimate.

### Political Institutions

Well-developed political and electoral institutions similarly increase the likelihood of peaceful election transitions. Institutions provide the resilience that democracies require to withstand potential conflicts following controversial or contested elections. Instead of taking their grievances to the streets, defeated candidates or opposition groups can challenge election results or the fairness of election procedures through institutional mechanisms, such as electoral complaint commissions or courts. The broad expectation that these institutions will adjudicate the disputes fairly makes a peaceful, democratic transition more likely and diminishes the likelihood of conflict as an avenue for contesting

election results. Strong and effective electoral institutions enhance electoral process credibility and reinforce the public expectation that electoral results will be respected. They assure defeated candidates that the victors' terms of office are limited and there will be opportunities to compete again.

Political institutions that restrain, or check, governmental power also contribute to stability.

This is especially important in new and developing democracies, where election outcomes can produce uncertain political environments or moments of crisis. If a political leader refuses to accept the election returns, a strong, independent judiciary capable of resisting that recalcitrance is crucial. When an incumbent is defeated at the polls, it helps greatly if the government bureaucracy does not rely on political leaders for patronage or for its members' livelihoods. Civil servants thus will have less incentive to support any efforts of a defeated leader to reject a democratic process. Established political institutions channel dissent and create incentives for leaders, lawmakers, and bureaucrats to govern democratically.

Effective governance—including public accountability, responsiveness, transparency and efficiency—helps build political legitimacy for democracy. As President Barack Obama said to the parliament of Ghana, “In the 21st century, capable, reliable, and transparent institutions are the key to success—strong parliaments and honest police forces, independent judges and journalists, a vibrant private sector, and civil society.”

### Civil Society



*U.S. Ambassador James Entwistle visits INEC Chairman Prof. Attahiru Jega at the INEC headquarters Abuja on January 20, 2014 -- photo by Idika Onyukwu.*

Like political institutions and the rule of law, a strong civil society—supported by a free press—enhances the legitimacy of democratic practices and reinforces expectations that electoral winners and losers will respect the “rules of the game.” Civil society organizations can act as a check on governmental power and deter election losers tempted to thwart the democratic process.

Genuinely independent and broadly representative nongovernmental organizations and other civil society institutions help ensure that candidates and elected officials respect election results and democratic processes. They can facilitate important dialogue between citizens and their government and supply information that democratic, representative governments need. By articulating a society's issues and concerns, advocacy groups contribute to transparency and accountability.

By pressuring the government to follow through on its campaign commitments, they enhance government responsiveness. Civil society organizations can shape government behavior and can help define people's expectations of how their government will operate.

Internet and social media technologies now provide civil society groups new platforms from which to organize, exchange information, and push for greater government transparency and accountability. Blogging, text messaging, online social networking, and similar Web-based tools enable civil society groups to expand their audiences, rapidly increase their membership, and leverage international support for local or national causes. During the post-election controversy in Iran, for example, the online micro blogging platform Twitter enabled Iranians to question election results and to inform the world about unfolding political events.

Former Secretary Clinton linked these organizations and networks to government accountability and responsiveness. Civil society, she says, “pushes political institutions to be agile and responsive to the people they serve.” Civil society organizations help citizens develop new ways to call for government accountability and transparency and increase the incentives of governments to adhere to democratic norms and principles.

### Respecting and Moving Beyond Elections

Democracy creates certain public expectations and understandings, including respect for the rule of law and for the outcomes of elections. It requires respect for values beyond elections. Speaking in Cairo in 2009, President Obama emphasized these fundamental truths.

“So no matter where it takes hold, government of the people and by the people sets a single standard

for all who would hold power: You must maintain your power through consent, not coercion; you must respect the rights of minorities and participate with a spirit of tolerance and compromise; you must place the interests of your people and the legitimate workings of the political

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*Respect for the rule of law, well developed political institutions, and strong civil society engagement together reinforce expectations for and the likelihood of peaceful political transitions.*

process above your party. Without these ingredients, elections alone do not make true democracy.”

Respect for the rule of law, well developed political institutions, and strong civil society engagement together reinforce expectations for and the likelihood of peaceful political transitions. States where institutions represent diverse interests, channel public demands, facilitate political discourse, and implement laws effectively and impartially are more likely to command respect. In these nations, the possibility of effecting change through peaceful means discourages extra-constitutional challenges to election results and helps ensure that elections are a first step to broader democratic governance. ❖

*Editor’s Note: The opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. government.*

## Ambassador Rice Discusses Security and Elections with Northern Governors

On March 19, 2014, National Security Advisor Susan E. Rice welcomed 12 governors and one deputy-governor from Nigeria to the White House to discuss areas of strategic importance to both the United States and Nigeria.

Ambassador Rice and the governors discussed the need to bring an end to the violence and insurgency in northern Nigeria; create broad-based economic opportunity in the north and throughout Nigeria; protect and respect human rights; strengthen democratic governance; and ensure that the 2015 elections in Nigeria are free and fair. The meeting was an important opportunity to underscore



*National Security Advisor Susan E. Rice*

the U.S. partnership with the government—at both the federal and state levels—and people of Nigeria.

The visiting officials represented Nigeria’s north and middle belt, which face numerous security, development, and socioeconomic challenges. The leaders shared their concerns about

the ongoing Boko Haram insurgency that has indiscriminately killed hundreds of innocent Nigerians this year. She and the governors agreed on the need for comprehensive approaches to counterinsurgency that couple security measures with deepened investment to promote opportunity and development across the country. Ambassador Rice drew special attention to the importance of Nigeria’s 2015 elections, the role that governors can play in countering corruption, and how the United States remains committed to partnering with Nigeria to address shared challenges.

The governors were visiting Washington to participate in a U.S. Institute of Peace-hosted forum. ❖



## U.S. Ambassador Entwistle Urges Politicians to Take Public Pledge of Non-Violence

By Idika U. Onyukwu,  
Editor CROSSROADS

**W**ith federal elections scheduled in February 2015, U.S. Ambassador James Entwistle has challenged politicians to publicly take the non-violence pledge now, before, during, and after the 2015 elections.

Ambassador Entwistle also noted that the U.S. Mission in Nigeria has been active in Zamfara State through the United States Agency for International Development and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in helping the state deal with issues of lead poisoning arising from illegal mining and in PEPFAR supported HIV/AIDS health programs.

different areas, including education, security cooperation, health, cultural relations, and investments.

"The United States is not here to do things for Nigeria but to do things with Nigeria as two equals working together to make the world a better place," Ambassador Entwistle told Kaduna State Deputy Governor Nuhu Audu Bagoda and members of



*U.S. Ambassador James F. Entwistle (center), flanked by Zamfara State Governor Abdul Aziz Yari Abubakar (right), and his deputy Malam Ibrahim Wakkala in Gusau --photo by Ayodele Durudola*

Ambassador Entwistle spoke February 9, when he paid a courtesy visit to the Zamfara State Governor Abdul Aziz Yari Abubakar at the Government House in Gusau. In the full complement of the state executive and legislative members, Ambassador Entwistle said, "As we head towards elections a year from now, one thing I urge you to begin to take, as politicians, is a public pledge of non-violence." He noted that one of the most important elements of a democracy is elections. He assured listeners that the United States was ready to stand with Nigeria and was looking forward to credible, transparent, free, and fair elections in 2015 that Nigerians need and deserve.

Before coming to Zamfara State, Ambassador Entwistle had earlier visited Kaduna, where he met with Deputy Governor Nuhu Audu Bagoda. He assured the people of

the Kaduna State Executive Council on February 8. He said his visit to Kaduna was a key part of his first trip to the North, which would continue to Sokoto State.



*Ambassador Entwistle exchanges gifts with Deputy Governor Nuhu Audu Bagoda in Kaduna -- photo by Idika U. Onyukwu*

"As the U.S. ambassador to Nigeria," Entwistle said, "I will work to ensure that this unique partnership between our two countries continues to grow and flourish."

The ambassador's delegation to Kaduna and Zamfara included Mike Harvey, mission director of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Dr. Pam Schmoll, wife of the ambassador, and Laura Harvey, wife of the USAID director.

Kaduna State of U.S. support as equal partners, working together in

The delegation also visited Sokoto state in continuation of the



ambassador's familiarization tour of Nigeria.

In Sokoto, the U.S. Mission team met with Governor Aliyu Magatakarda Wamakko at the Government House and also visited former President Alhaji Shehu Shagari at his residence.

The team also inspected three USAID development projects, including a drop-in-center for educational/vocational training and a community dispensary located in the Wamakko Local Government Area.

Before returning to Abuja, Ambassador Entwistle and his team paid a courtesy visit to Sultan of Sokoto Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III in his palace. ❖



*Wife of U.S. Ambassador Dr. Pam Schmoll, Ambassador James Entwistle (center) greets former President Shehu Shagari --photo by Idika U. Onyukwu.*



*Photo captions:  
center left; USAID Mission Director Mike Harvey and Ambassador Entwistle inspect USAID-funded school project in Sokoto.*

***Center right:** Ambassador Entwistle pumps water from a USAID-funded community dispensary project.*

***Bottom:** Ambassador Entwistle with Sultan of Sokoto Alhaji Sa'ad Abubakar III -- photos by Idika U. Onyukwu.*





# U.S. Charges Nigerian Youths to Embark on Development Projects

**U**.S. Ambassador and Counselor Thomas Shannon has advised Nigerian youth to work on projects that would help make their country a better place. Ambassador Shannon, who led a U.S. presidential delegation to Nigeria's Centenary celebration in March, spoke at the graduation ceremony of the Carrington Youth Fellowship Initiative (CYFI), sponsored by the United States Consulate General in Lagos. Fifteen Nigerian youth participated in the 2013 program.

"As gifted and exceptional youth, you have much to offer your society, especially in this time of economic growth and political change," he said. He added, "it is my hope that the skills you have developed through this fellowship will serve you throughout your careers and your lives, as today's youth become tomorrow's leaders."

Also speaking at the event, U.S. Consul General Jeffrey Hawkins described the CYFI as "an amazing home-grown collaboration between incredibly talented and dedicated Nigerian youth and the best and brightest of our new American diplomats." CYFI supports the projects financially



*U.S. Department of State Counselor Thomas Shannon, presents certificates to graduates of the Walter Carrington Youth Fellowship Initiative in Lagos --photo by Ayodele Durudola*

and diplomatically, and "we invest considerable time and attention into the development of the fellows professionally," said the consul general.

CYFI, a program named after former U.S. Ambassador to Nigeria Walter Carrington, is a dynamic youth-based initiative launched in 2011 by the U.S. Consulate General, Lagos. CYFI brings together Nigerian youth of exceptional vision, skills,

geria.

CYFI fellows are committed to putting the ideals of Walter Carrington into practice. The CYFI board of directors, in conjunction with the Public Affairs Section at the U.S. Consulate General, Lagos, selects fellows who demonstrate exceptional vision, skills, and experience. Fellows are then grouped into teams based on interest. The teams develop and implement their own youth engagement project over the course of the one-year fellowship.

and experience to design and implement projects that have a positive impact on Nigerian society. Ambassador Carrington was a champion of civil liberties, democracy, and closer ties between the United States and Ni-

In addition to working with their team to bring their projects into fruition, CYFI fellows have the opportunity to attend various networking events, roundtables, and forums on relevant social issues hosted by the U.S. Consulate General, Lagos. The year concludes with an awards ceremony for fellows, where fellows are inducted into the CYFI Alumni Program.❖



*Fellows of the CYFI program seated.*





*"For a diplomat who speaks polished English, French, and Siamese, a taste of Nigeria's Pidgin English will not be a bad idea even if his tongue gets twisted in the process." Story by Fidel Bam and cartoon illustration courtesy of TELL Magazine.*

## U.S. Ambassador Yarn Pidgin for Radio

When an *Oga Ambassador* is billed to have a date with *Oga Madam* of a radio station, listeners naturally expect to see how a diplomat used to observing protocol on a daily basis is going to "break the rule" and communicate in Pidgin, the language of the hoi polloi. The guest, James Entwistle, U.S. ambassador in Nigeria, speaks English, French, and Siamese. His host (hostess?), Omotunde David, aka Omotunde Lolo, *Oga Madam*, Wazobia FM Lagos speaks only Pidgin on air as a matter of house style. Stalemate? No, the ambassador, who had served in various African countries like

Niger, Cameroon, and Central African Republic before coming to Nigeria, seemed well prepared for the encounter on Thursday, January 30, 2014.

"How you dey?" "I dey kampe." The presenter formally welcomes him to the studio where humor oozes out of the microphones "per second per second" with the likes of Yaw Yaw, Nedu, Diplomatic OPJ, Igos, Lolo's co-presenter, KBaba, the midnight Love Doctor, and SisiWazobia. So where else to start other than throw a question on the controversial same-sex marriage issue and the claim that

the U.S. government is about to review its support for Nigeria on account of the provisions in the anti-gay law. The ambassador took the gauntlet, "Me I no talk say sanction go dey for Nigeria. Make I repeat myself, the U.S. government no say sanction go dey for Nigeria because of same-sex palava o."

It was obvious the ambassador did not take kindly to the hoopla arising over the U.S. reaction to the anti-gay law recently signed by President Goodluck Jonathan's government.

Another issue in focus was the elections in 2015. He was asked what the U.S. government would do to help ensure a free and fair



election, which would help in producing good leaders to rule the nation.

"First, make I tell you say U.S. no get any candidate for mind. The only thing wey go sweet us be say make the election dey transparent, credible and concluded Make Nigerians pick candidates wey go sweet dem belle, wey go do well well for dem."

He also responded in passable Pidgin to questions on Niger Delta militancy, maritime security, and President Barack Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) program.

No interview with an American ambassador in Nigeria can ever be conclusive without a question on visas. Listeners would not have to wait long as Oga Madam finally asked Oga Ambassador the ogbonge question. "Many people dey complain say America no

*U.S. Ambassador James F. Entwistle in the studios of Wazobia during live interview in Pidgin English.*



are being granted visas.

"Even sef in our consular office in Lagos and Abuja people no dey wait for long again for dem visa. Dem dey do visa for Nigerians

quick quick." Funny? Well, when Omotunde Lolo, a law graduate of Lagos State University who has found love with the microphone, hosts a seasoned and adventurous American diplomat, it's an opportunity to let down hairs, throw banter and damn protocol to give the listeners a treat of a

way. "For Wazobia if you no wan laugh, you no go know when all your teeth go waka comot your mouth." True. With presenters like Omotunde Lolo and newscasters like Nedu, it is laughter galore on Wazobia FM. Wonder how the ambassador felt on hearing Nedu on the news beat. "Let me gba small shikinni brake here and go market I is coming back. Stay tuned while we pause for advert. I am coming back!"

In Pidgin, the unwritten rule is BREAK THE RULE! The more you scatter grammar and "murder" syntax, the more you breathe life into the language and paradoxically, the more interesting it becomes. ❖



*In the "House of Pidgin," l-r, Entwistle 2nd left and his team, including Pamela, his wife, and Jeffrey Hawkings, U.S. consul general (second and first right respectively) with the WAZOBIA team Omotunde Lolo (third left), Igos, and Ago.*

dey give dem visa to enter dem country, wetin we do una? No be our money we go spend when you give us?" He did not take time to respond.

"This one surprise me o!," he feigned surprise as he set out to show the progress already made in expediting action on visa applications and that more people

lifetime.

"Oyinbo man talk am for Pidgin and laugh wan kill me die. Loll," reacted a listener on Facebook. Another reacted in a funnier



*L-r, Pamela Schmoll, wife of U.S. ambassador; Omotunde Lolo of Wazobia, and Ambassador Entwistle.*



## BNC: In Support of Free and Fair Elections



*U.S. Assistant Sec. of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield and Permanent Sec. Ministry of Foreign Affairs Udoma Udo-Young at the BNC opening session -- photo by Idika Onyukwu*

*Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield led a U.S. delegation in the Governance, Transparency, and Integrity Working Group meeting of the United States-Nigeria Binational Commission (BNC) in Abuja on February 17-18.*

*The U.S. delegation met with delegates from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC). The sessions were hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and coordinated by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, Ambassador (Dr.) Martin I. Udoma. Below are excerpts from a Joint Communique at the end of meeting.*

**T**he Federal Republic of Nigeria and the United States of America recognized the importance of peaceful and credible elections to the prosperous and democratic development of a united Nigeria. Both countries agreed that ensuring the credibility of the electoral process would require adequate preparations for activities at all stages of the electoral cycle. Both countries also recognized the importance of continuing a program of electoral reforms as outlined by

the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

Both countries recognized the adverse effects of violence in the electioneering process. Nigeria expressed its determination to prevent thuggery and all forms of violence during the election period.

Both countries recognized the relevance of the security services in working with the INEC to safeguard election materials; to maintain the safety and security of election officials inclusive of INEC and party agents, election observers, and the electorate, throughout the electioneering process.

Nigeria is committed to providing appropriate training to the security services to enhance the awareness of their roles and responsibilities prior to and during Election Day events. The United States will support these efforts through various programs.

Both countries recognized and valued the immense contributions by legislators, public and private sectors, civil society groups, and the media to the development of democratic culture in Nigeria. *Read more at: <http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/ae-021914c2.html>*

## U.S. Freezes More Than \$458 Million Stolen by General Abacha

**T**he U.S. Department of Justice has frozen more than \$458 million in corruption proceeds hidden in bank accounts around the world by former Nigerian dictator Sani Abacha and conspirators. A civil forfeiture complaint unsealed March 5 in the United States District Court in the District of Columbia seeks recovery of more than \$550 million in connection with the largest kleptocracy forfeiture action brought



in the department's history.

The restraint of funds includes approximately \$313 million in two bank accounts in the Bailiwick of Jersey and \$145 million in two bank accounts in France. In addition, four investment portfolios and three bank accounts in the United Kingdom with an expected value of at least \$100 million have also been restrained, but the exact amounts in the accounts will be determined at a later date.

Acting Assistant Attorney General Mythili Raman of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and Assistant Director in **(U.S. Freezes \$458..cont'd on page 14)**

# U.S.-Nigeria Strengthen Trade & Investment



**Olusegun O. Aganga**

**T**he United States March 11 hosted the eighth meeting of the U.S.-Nigerian Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) Council, advancing the two countries' trade and investment interests and strengthening their overall relationship.

Discussions focused on several common objectives, including improving market access, utilizing the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), protecting intellectual property rights, implementing the new World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement, and improving the bilateral investment climate, according to a news release the same day from the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR).

Discussions were led for the United States by U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman and for Nigeria by Nigerian Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment Olusegun O. Aganga.

"Nigeria and the United States have a long history of productive and mutually beneficial trade and investment ties," according to the USTR release. "As the largest market in West Africa and one of the largest economies in Africa, Nigeria plays a central role in the regional economy."

"Total U.S.-Nigerian trade (exports plus imports) was valued at

\$18.2 billion in 2013, USTR said. U.S. imports from Nigeria were valued at \$11.7 billion, \$11.6 billion of which was crude oil. Non-oil Nigerian exports to the United States under AGOA include leather, prepared vegetables, beans, cocoa paste,

spices, and cassava.

U.S. exports to Nigeria were valued at \$6.5 billion in 2013. Major U.S. exports to Nigeria, USTR said, include mineral fuels, vehicles, wheat, machinery, and plastics. U.S. foreign direct investment in Nigeria totaled \$8.1 billion in 2012 (the latest data available), up 53.6 percent from 2011.

The TIFA Council "is a critical part of comprehensive U.S. engagement with the Nigerian government to promote sound trade policies, attract investment to Nigeria, and advance sustainable and inclusive development," USTR said. The TIFA Council is working to enhance U.S.-Nigerian cooperation in order to expand opportunities for workers, farmers, businesses, and consumers in both countries, it said.

The United States and Nigeria signed the TIFA in 2000. The TIFA Council serves as a mechanism for regular, high-level dialogue on enhancing U.S.-Nigerian trade and investment ties and improving coordination between the United States and Nigeria on multilateral and bilateral trade and investment issues. The previous TIFA Council meeting was held in Abuja, Nigeria, in December 2012. ♦

*(U.S. Freezes \$458..cont'd)*

Charge Valerie Parlave of the FBI's Washington Field Office made the announcement.

"We will not let the U.S. banking system be a tool for dictators to hide their criminal proceeds," said Assistant Director-in-Charge Parlave. "This action demonstrates the FBI's ability to combat international corruption and money laundering by seizing the assets of those involved. I want to thank the special agents, financial analysts, and prosecutors whose hard work over the years resulted in today's announcement."

This case was brought under the Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative by a team of dedicated prosecutors in the Criminal Division's Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section, working in partnership with federal law enforcement agencies to forfeit the proceeds of foreign official corruption and, where appropriate, return those proceeds to benefit the people harmed by these acts of corruption and abuse of office. Individuals with information about possible proceeds of foreign corruption located in or laundered through the United States should contact federal law enforcement or send an **email to [kleptocracy@usdoj.gov](mailto:kleptocracy@usdoj.gov)**.

The investigation was conducted by the FBI. The case is being prosecuted by trial attorney Elizabeth Aloï and Assistant Deputy Chief Daniel Claman of the Criminal Division's Asset Forfeiture and Money Laundering Section, with substantial support from the Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs. The department appreciates the extensive assistance provided by the governments of Jersey, France, and the United Kingdom in this investigation. ♦

For more, visit <http://www.justice.gov/>





**USAID Deputy  
Director Julie  
Koenen takes in the  
scent of a locally  
made shea butter  
cream from Shea-  
Coco**

**Company -- photo by  
Idika U. Onyukwu**

# Ready for Export

**O**n Friday, March 7 in Abuja, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in collaboration with the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC), hosted eight enterprising women entrepreneurs at an exhibition with representatives from *Le Look*, *SheaCoco*, *Oluchi Gems*, and *Gurara Cosmetics* in attendance. The exhibition marked activities celebrating International Women's Day 2014 in Nigeria.

Exhibitors came all the way from Lagos, Kano, Minna, and Nassarawa

States. Others were from the Federal Capital Territory.

"I make beautiful and stylish hand bags, iPad jackets, and school backpacks, all from waste products," said Chinwe Ezenwa, chief executive officer of *Le Look*, "and the Nigerian Export Promotion Council has really empowered me to improve the quality and standard of these products for export. Today, I have branches in Lagos and Abuja."

The NEPC is USAID/Nigeria's institutional partner, engaged in promoting export of agricultural and handcrafted products from Nigeria.

USAID and the NEPC signed a memorandum of understanding in February 2014 to strengthen the capacity of Nigerian entrepreneurs to improve the processing and marketing of products such as shea, cashew, sesame, leather, garments, processed foods, cocoa, home décor, fruits and vegetables, and seafood products in the West African and American markets under the USAID-funded Nigeria Expanded Trade and Transportation (NEXTT) project.

At the exhibition, products made from leather and local fabric—such as the handmade bags, shoes, and



cushions from Global Services—carpets, exotic gemstones and jewelry, cosmetics, and other items were on display. Also, a wide variety of body creams, lotions, body washes, and anti-dandruff cream extracted from natural coconut and shea butter oil were some of the fastest selling products at the exhibition.

In her opening remarks, USAID Deputy Mission Director Julie Koenen thanked the eight women exhibitors for beautifying International Women's Day "with this colorful display of products." She said USAID, in collaboration with NEPC, had decided to organize the event to celebrate the achievements of women in Nigeria.

Under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), Nigeria qualifies for duty-free export to the United States of products such as dried fruit, boxed fruit juices, shea butter, ethnic printed fabrics, leather hand bags and shoes, cashews (raw, roasted, salted), fish (frozen, dried, or smoked), and gum Arabic. However, the country has yet to fully utilize the benefits of AGOA. With the USAID exhibition over, a new vista of opportunity might just be beckoning to these women entrepreneurs. ♦



*Photo captions: **Top:** Chinwe Ezenwa (2nd right), chief executive officer, LeLook, holds up her product at the USAID exhibition.*

***Middle:** USAID Deputy Mission Director Julie Koenen (right) and Zonal Co-ordinator for the Women in Export Development Program Obidike Ifeyinwa inspect leather products on display at the exhibition from Global Services.*

***Bottom:** Exotic beads from Oluchi Gems on display -- photos by Idika Onyukwu*



“Through your ICT center and your support for this pilot *afriCoderDojo*, you are making a tremendous contribution to youth education and putting in place the building blocks for an exciting future.” With these words, Public Affairs Officer (PAO) Dehab Ghebreab congratulated the Oando Foundation on the launch of *afriCoderDojo*/ICT Center with the support of U.S. Department of State at the Archbishop Taylor Memorial Primary School, Lagos. “This is a visible commitment to promoting youth ICT skills across Nigeria,” Ghebreab said.

The launch of the ICT Center coincided with that of *afriCoderDojo* in Nigeria (visit <http://coderdojo.com/tags/afriCoderDojo>). According to the director of the Oando Foundation, Ms. Tokunboh Durosaro, the ICT Center is an initiative of her foundation to fill the technology gap in government primary schools in Nigeria. Currently, the foundation is in 47 schools in 19 states of Nigeria providing training for teachers and students as well as scholarships to deserving students.

*afriCoderDojo* is a pan-African wide effort to teach young people to code, develop websites, apps, programs, games, and more. Based on the global CoderDojo(<http://coderdojo.com/>) movement, *afriCoderDojo* relies on a network of partners and volunteers to teach youth the basics of coding anywhere there is a computer and an Internet connection.

*afriCoderDojo* is the result of a partnership between CoderDojo, the U.S. Department of State, and the Liberalizing Innovation Opportunity Nations partnership.



*Students at the launch of the ICT Center.*

## Promoting ICT skills *Among Nigerian Youth*



PAO Ghebreab said *afriCoderDojos* are set up, run and taught by real-world experts in coding and development at local schools, universities, companies, or innovation hubs across Africa.

"It's through initiatives like this that we start to see youth develop

a lifelong love of technology. And this is a fire that we hope to continue to feed over the years."

PAO Ghebreab noted that at these ICT centers, children get an opportunity to meet other kids who think like them and create like them. "They get to meet with experts that aim to inspire youth to explore opportunities associated with ICT."

Present at the occasion were Olayinka Oladunjoye, representing the Lagos state commissioner for education; Dr. Odein H. Ajumogobia, chairman, Oando Foundation Board of Trustees; and other partners such as the Ford Foundation, Lego, and local government officials. ❖



*Dignitaries at the launch of ICT/afriCoderDojo Center in Lagos.*



**YALI -- continued from page 2**

ity and creating more transparent and accountable organizations. We share their conviction that such actions will bring greater international investment and economic diversification to Nigeria. We know that their work to combat trafficking of vulnerable persons and lethal drugs and armaments will surely reduce human misery and result in a better standard of living for all Nigerians. And we commend their efforts.

The U.S. Mission and the YALI Washington Fellowship interviewing teams want to thank these young Nigerians for allowing us to view history in the making. Although we were unable to invite more young people this year, we have worked hard to ensure the representation of a cross-section of Nigeria's finest in the 2014 YALI Washington Fellowship Program. We also are working on ways to continue to engage the hundreds of Nigerians we had the privilege of meeting in the course of the interviews, as well as the many others who applied to the program. Altogether, you are an inspiring and powerful force for constructive change, embodying the best in Nigerian civil society.

We extend our best wishes to Nigeria's 2014 YALI fellows and our sincere thanks to everyone who applied to the program.

*James F. Entwistle*

*U.S. Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Nigeria*

## YALI Through the Years



*President's Forum with Young African Leaders*

**A**ugust 2010 -- On the 50th anniversary of independence for many African nations, President Obama invited more than 115 young leaders from more than 40 African countries to the White House. Over three days, these leaders shared their visions for good governance, economic opportunity, and partnership between Africa and the United States.



*The First Lady's Young African Women Leaders Forum*

**J**une 2011 -- First Lady Michelle Obama hosted this two-day event in Johannesburg and Soweto, South Africa for more than 75 young women leaders. The forum focused on inspiring leadership and women's empowerment and community service, with the understanding that women are key to unlocking Africa's development.

*The Young African Leaders Innovation Summit and Mentoring Partnership*

**J**une 2012 -- The U.S. government brought more than 60 participants from over 35 African countries for an Innovation Summit in Washington, D.C. followed by two weeks of hands-on experience in business internships in cities across the United States, which connected U.S. business and civic leaders with these promising African entrepreneurs. ❖





*U.S. Embassy Information Resource Officer Malore Brown (second right, front row), presenting Kindle Fires to public librarians in Abuja, March 20, 2014 -- photo by Idika U. Onyukwu.*

## Kindle Fire for Nigeria's Public Libraries

**O**n March 19, six public libraries within northern Nigeria, namely Benue, Nassarawa, Kaduna, Niger, Kogi, and the FCT, each received 15 Kindle Fire HD 8.9 4G LTE with WIFI devices and six months' Internet subscription as part of a U.S. government program in support of education in Nigeria.

Librarians from the six selected

public libraries also received a one day hands-on training on the effective use of the eReader (Kindle) organized by the Abuja Information Resource Center. The training was led by Information Resource Officer Malore Brown. Participants were taught the basic features of Kindle Fire and how to navigate the device. The librarians also received training on how to upload content and update statistics using the Kindle.

A Kindle is a thin, lightweight, mobile, electronic reading device that is used to read and download electronic books and other information materials. Kindles are product of Amazon.com, an American international electronic commerce company and the world's largest online retailer. The device can store thousands

of books, magazines, music, and videos.

The donated Kindles will be placed at the six designated public libraries as a pilot project funded by the Africa Bureau of the U.S. Department of State in Washington, DC. The Kindle project will provide public library users free access to information and e-books.

Public libraries serve the community by providing accurate and up-to-date information to information seekers. They also provide readers of all ages with electronic books, and novels, research materials, and access to a wide range of information.

During the presentation, Brown said, "Through this generous gift, we expect that the Kindles will encourage reading and learning culture among Nigerians for the benefit of the country's development." ❖



*Elizabeth Akinbulomo, director Information Resource Center (second left), explains the use of Kindle to librarians -- photo by Idika U. Onyukwu.*



# EducationUSA/Information Resources

## Abuja -- Lagos

### Do You Want to Study in the United States?



The EducationUSA Advising Centers in Abuja and Lagos provide quality, timely, accurate, unbiased information about all accredited U.S. higher education institutions for persons wishing to study in the United States. For more information about EducationUSA and study opportunities in the United States, please visit:

<http://www.educationusa.state.gov>

#### Educational Advising Centers Locations:

##### Abuja:

Embassy of the United States of America,  
Plot 1075 Diplomatic Drive, Central District Area,  
Abuja. Telephone: 234-09-4614251/4241/4257;

Fax: 234-09-4614334/4010; E-mail: [eacabuja@state.gov](mailto:eacabuja@state.gov). Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/educationusa.abuja>

##### Lagos:

U.S. Consulate General, Public Affairs Section,  
2 Walter Carrington Crescent; Victoria Island-Lagos.  
Telephone: 01-460-3400/2724/2725/3801/3802  
E-mail: [lagos@educationusa.info](mailto:lagos@educationusa.info)



#### Nigerian Youth Discuss Future of Urban Development in Lagos

In their quest to turn Lagos into a megacity of the future, several Nigerian youth said

they felt the Lagos state government should focus on education and long-term solutions rather than expecting rapid and sweeping change. Read more at: [http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/pe\\_09152012.html](http://nigeria.usembassy.gov/pe_09152012.html)

The resources highlighted below are available at the Information Resource Centers in Abuja and Lagos. To register as a member, please visit: <http://tinyurl.com/ircregistration> and for all enquiries, please write to: [ircabuja@state.gov](mailto:ircabuja@state.gov) (North) and [wyllagos@state.gov](mailto:wyllagos@state.gov) (South).

#### Women's History Month, 2014 - Presidential Proclamation



Throughout our nation's history, American women have led movements for social and economic justice, made

groundbreaking scientific discoveries, enriched our culture with stunning works of art and literature, and charted bold directions in our foreign policy. They have served our country with valor, from the battlefields of the Revolutionary War to the deserts of Iraq and mountains of Afghanistan. During Women's History Month, we recognize the victories, struggles, and stories of the women who have made our country what it is today. *Read more:* <http://goo.gl/SeYzeJ>



#### Kerry on Recent Attacks in Nigeria by Boko Haram

Unspeakable violence and acts of terror like the ones committed by Boko Haram last week in northern Nigeria are horrific, wrong, and have no place in our world. Last Saturday, a brazen attack on the village of Izge, Nigeria, near the border with Cameroon took the lives of more than one hundred innocent persons. Not less than a week had passed before Boko Haram mounted another attack in Bama, setting 1,500 buildings ablaze, killing more than 115 people, and leaving many others injured. Read more at: <http://goo.gl/IsYVCd>

#### Visit Us

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Abuja, Nigeria

Telephone: 09-461-4000 Fax: 0-9-461-4011

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#### Open

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday

Whitney M. Young Information Resource Center  
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2 Walter Carrington Crescent, Victoria Island, Lagos Nigeria  
Telephone: 01-460-3400

Fax: 01-1-261-2218

E-mail: [wyllagos@state.gov](mailto:wyllagos@state.gov)

#### Open

9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday

9:00 a.m.-12 noon Friday

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